under:—

Year	Profit(+)/Loss(-)
(Rs. In Crores)	
1995-96	(-) 204. 27
1996-97(April'96—Sept'97)	(-) 452:20
1997-98(Oct'97—March'98)	(+) 29.53 (*)

(b) The losses are explained chiefly by high capital related charges *viz.* interest and depreciation on the one hand and sluggish market conditions prevailing in domestic & international markets on the other.

(c) With a view to' assist RINL become financially viable, the Government approved a financial restructuring of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. in May, 1998 and further directed RINL to prepare a comprehensive revival plan. The company engaged an internationally reputed consultant to study the turnaround strategies and prepare a comprehensive revival plan for long term viability of the company. The consultants have since submitted their report. And a proposal for the revival of the Plant is under inter-ministerial consideration.

Improvement in mining industries in North-East

1369. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of STEEL & MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan for improvement of mining industries in the North-Eastern States;

(b) the measures taken by Government for improvement of mining industries in the country;

(c) whether the Geological Survey of India has made a survey programme in our area bordering Myanmar; and

(*) [During 1997-98 (Six months period), the nominal profit is on account of write-back of interest due to Government following conversion of loans from Government into preference capital]

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) Yes, Sir. Sub-Regional office of Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) has been opened at Gauhati in April, 1998 as a measure to improve coordination between the North-Eastern States and the Central Government for the development of the mineral sector. For development of mineral industry in the North-Eastern States, candidate mineral deposits and their exploration status have been identified for quick exploitation. The National Mineral Policy, 1993 announced in tune with the economic liberalisation policy, opened up the mineral sector for private initiatives, both domestic and foreign. Prospecting and mining rights are granted by the concerned State Governments in accordance with the provisions of Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 and the Rules framed thereunder.

(b) Consequent to the National Mineral Policy announced by the Government for the development of mining sector in India, the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 has been amended. Further, a Committee under the Chairmanship of the Secretary (Mines) was constituted in February, 1997 to review the existing laws and procedures for regulation and development of minerals and to suggest steps to make them compatible with the changed policies. The terms of references of this Committee, *inter-alia,* included delegation of powers to the State Governments for grant / renewal of prospecting licenses and mining leases and' other related approvals for minerals covered under part 'C of the First Schedule of the MM(R&D) Act and measures to prevent illegal mining etc.

(c) The Geological Survey of India (GSI) regularly takes up investigations for exploring various mineral occurrences in the North Eastern Region. Geological Survey of India, North Eastern Region,

has made survey programmes mostly for geotechnical investigations of water resource development projects in areas bordering Myanmar. Programmes for appraisal of mineral / natural resource potential development on cadastral map base have also been initiated by GSI in the States of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. Exploration and exploitation of minerals is a continuous process depending upon the availability of prospects in the country including North-Eastern Region.

(d) Does not arise.

बोकारि स्टील प्लांट के कोल्ड रोलिंग मिल का आधुनिकीकरण

1370. **श्री गया सिंह** : क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार स्टील अथॉरिटी ऑफ इण्डिया के बोकरो स्टील प्लांट की कोल्ड रोलिग मिल के आधुनिकरण का विचार रखती है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) यदि नहीं, तो उसके कारण क्या है?

इस्पात तथा खान मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री रमेश बैस): (क) जी, नहीं।

(ख) और (ग) बोकारो इस्पात संयंत्र (बी एस एल) की शीत बेल्लित मिल के परिसज्जित उत्पादों की गुणवत्ता में सुधार करने के लिए थोड़े निवेश की कुछ योजनाएं इस समय स्टील अथॉरिटी ऑफ इंदिया लिमिटेड (सेल) के विचाराधीन है, जिन्हे इस प्रयोजन के लिए वित्तिय संसाधनों के उपलब्ध होने अर क्रमश: क्रियान्वित किया जाएगा।

Defective rails manufactured by SAIL

1371. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Metallurgical Laboratory Jamshedpur has observed that the defective rails manufactured by Steel Authority of India were behind the November 98 Khanna train disaster in which over 200 people were killed;

(b) if so, the details of the findings;

(c) whether action has been taken/is being taken in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) The National Metallurgical Laboratory (NML), Jamshedpur has conducted investigation on one rail piece supplied to them by RDSO, Lucknow. It has found certain segregation of inclusions in the rail from where, in their opinion the fatigue crack originated. The report also pointed out that the particular configuration of loading in service might have initiated the crack. It was opined that the crack nucleated and grew undetected to a critical size. The final fracture occurred under adverse environmental conditions of temperature and service load or accidental overload (none of which could be singled out decisively in the light of the available information and understanding).

(c) to (e) As a part of continuous efforts to improve the quality of rails, Bhilai Steel Plant had already undertaken the projects like installation of RH degasser, ladle furnace at the steel making stage, on-line ultrasonic testing machine and eddy current surface detector. Of these, on-line ultrasonic testing machine to detect internal defects in the rails has been commissioned in rail mill in January 1999 and is under stabilisation. The eddy current surface crack detector is going to be commissioned by April/May, 1999. Other two projects, *i.e.* RH degasser and ladle furnace will be operational towards the end of the year 1999. These measures aim at further enhancing the quality of rails.